

CLEBURNE COUNTY

Honorable W.G. Sarrell, Jr.

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Vista Volunteer: Bernice McGee

Council Priorities

1. Eradicate methamphetamine/substance abuse

Continue seeking sound, proven programs to reduce and ultimately eliminate the manufacture and sale of methamphetamines and other Substances that reduce the quality of life for our children. Collaborate with ADECA to secure funding to address drug/substance issues from the prevention, rehabilitation and correctional fronts. Increase awareness of the hazards/safety issues through informational programs.

2. To continue to support quality education

Communicate the: Need for educational success. Opportunities available (emphasis on career technical). Need for collaboration. Need for community involvement in the education of children and parents. Support the search for funds: Write letters of support. Assist in grant research. Actively seek new avenues of funding.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Have all children healthy

Action Steps

- 1) Continue to distribute material for ALL Kids, Medicaid, and Alabama Child Caring insurance programs at community activities.
- 2) Seek a pediatric doctor to improve the health of Cleburne County's children.
- 3) Promote the availability of mental health counseling.

School Readiness

Action Steps

- 1) Develop and distribute brochures, flyers, pamphlets and news articles to raise community awareness in the need for early education.
- 2) Encourage and assist in early learning initiatives.
- 3) Encourage day care providers, day care centers, parents and others caring for children to improve the quality of their service.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Transportation

Action Steps

- 1) Search for opportunities to coordinate public transportation with Calhoun County to serve families in need of transportation.
- 2) Explore possibilities of locating "stations" where vans or busses could pick up riders.
- 3) Continue to encourage the donation of vehicles to HEARTS or other organizations for use by families with transportation needs.
- 4) Seek funding for gas vouchers to assist low income households with transportation needs.

GED and job training

Action Steps

- 1) Promote the GED by creating awareness of the availability of courses, times, dates, locations and qualifications.
- 2) Promote the use of the Cheaha Career Center and other job training programs.
- 3) Promote awareness and access to vocational rehabilitation services.
- 4) Encourage students to enter training in the vocational fields.

Build (basic) infrastructure

Action Steps

- 1) Actively support the Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) process in Heflin.
- 2) Promote and encourage the Children's Policy Council members to be active participants in Leadership Cleburne County.
- 3) Actively address the problems associated with a lack of internet access and limited high speed access capabilities.
- 4) Support the development of the industrial park and seek ways to help in its success.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Create higher expectations

Action Steps

- 1) The Cleburne County Children's Policy Council should promote a publicity campaign raising awareness to the many issues facing education in Cleburne County. The campaign will use statistical data as its bases.
- 2) The Cleburne County Children's Policy Council should act as an advocacy group on issues related to children, local funding for education and regulations regarding substandard housing.
- 3) Encourage implementation and enforcement of state truancy policies.

Adequate funding

Action Steps

- 1) The Cleburne County Children's Policy Council will support funding reform at the local and state level.
- 2) The Cleburne County Children's Policy Council will continue to support and assist with the acquisition of grants and resources that are coordinated with the Cleburne County Board of Education.

Quality education

Action Steps

- 1) Work collaboratively and support the Cleburne County Board of Education in the development (a) Work with the Superintendent of Education to adjust the 1995 Foundation Program and adequately fund the 4 x 4 curriculum, 2005 SACS standards, career technical education and NCLB federal legislation. (b) Assist the Superintendent of Education in obtaining adequate funding for social services and health services and reach his goal of a social worker for every 1,000 students and a nurse for every 500 students.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Reduce teen pregnancy

Action Steps

- 1) Educate the school system at large about the availability of Patient First Case Management through the Alabama Department of Health.
- 2) Continue to provide support for school social workers including financial resources, materials and medical resources.
- 3) Identify already pregnant teens to refer them to insurance and medical resources
- 4) Support prevention programs in the schools.

Locate and educate parents of birth of age five population on the availability of healthcare coverage and how to utilize these services

Action Steps

- 1) Work on outreach to local doctors and schools to increase enrollment of the Children's Rehabilitation.
- 2) Work with one or more events to screen for healthcare coverage to educate on preventive care.
- 3) Provide materials to this population regarding active immunizations, physical examinations and testing.
- 4) Provide resources and information on treatment and prevention of head lice.

Youth obesity

Action Steps

- 1) Support grant funding for Physical Education in the schools.
- 2) Support the Health and Nutrition Council activities in the schools, specifically the healthy snacks in vending machines.

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Reduce educational barriers to academic success

Action Steps

- 1) Investigate grant funding to initiate or extend tutoring programs to each school.
- 2) Encourage the involvement of businesses and organizations to support a partnership with the Cleburne County Schools.
- 3) Provide a resource person and funding to duplicate a proven reliable mentoring program in the schools.
- 4) Explore avenues for sustained funding for education, tutoring and mentoring programs.

Motivating parents to become involved in educational goals

Action Steps

- 1.) Seek grant opportunities to continue the Social Worker in the Schools Program.
- 2) Work to increase GED enrollment for parents.
- 3) Work to establish a Parenting Resource Center.
- 4) Promote Parent classes to teach discipline.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Substance Abuse Prevention

Action Steps

- 1) Support and work in conjunction with the Community Drug Awareness/Prevention Group (CSAC-Cleburne Substance Abuse Coalition).
- 2) Promote awareness/prevention through educational presentation to professionals, schools, and community.
- 3) Specifically seek the advice of Mike Reese with Operation Save Teens and ABC Board.
- 4) Support existing prevention/diversion programs for teens including Parent Project, Be Extreme, and Parks and Recreation Programs (Examine ways for at-risk youth to participate).

Family Violence Prevention

Action Steps

- 1) Participate in community education regarding domestic violence and resources to "become safe" from violent environments.
- 2) Invite Violence experts, specifically Lori Sawyer, victim's advocate and Jake Argo with the District Attorney's office to speak to Policy Council Membership.
- 3) Support awareness and training efforts of local Domestic Violence Task Force.

Child Abuse/Neglect

Action Steps

- 1) Participate in Training for professionals offered by CSAC, Domestic Violence Coalition, and other community Stakeholders.
- 2) Participate in Community Events for awareness of child/abuse neglect and foster home recruitment.
- 3) Continue and advance the strength of existing multidisciplinary groups such as the Multi-Needs/Multi-Disciplinary Team, CSAC, Domestic Violence Task Force, Quality Assurance Committee, Children's Policy Council and Sub-Committees.

Policy Recommendations

- Concentrate on the eradication of Methamphetamine production and use.
- Seek ways to provide transportation to low income families.
- Continue to support a healthy lifestyle and improve the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

Accomplishments

- The Jump Start Program kicked off on July 4th (under age five reading program) as of June shipment of books there were over 450 children registered. Each child receives a book a month mailed to their home free of charge.
- The Sarrell Dental Center opened in September with a state of the art facility that sees children age 3 through 20 that have MEDICAID, All Kids or no insurance. All co-pays are waived.
- The Be Extreme program was a huge success and is tentatively scheduled to be replicated in two other states this year. Congratulations to our School Social Worker and the Parent Involvement and Skills committee.
- The LINC-ID program is operating in the schools beginning in the elementary school for the first time.
- Several of our council members attended a Meth training course in TN and have formed a committee to develop programs to deal with drug problems in the county. There have already been several classes dealing with the issue scheduled.